

Excerpt Terms & Conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity of scripts.

Family Plays

The Christmas Dream

One-act drama adapted by

G. E. Clark

Based on a poem by

Edwin Markham

The Christmas Dream

Based on a poem by Edwin Markham, this may solve the problem of finding a good Christmas play. Designed for presentation on a stage, in a chancel, or anywhere people can gather to watch, it may be the featured element of a Christmas program, or it may take the place of a sermon.

*"Our theatre group toured again ... with this play ... We really enjoy it and making the Christmas season special for others."
(Nellie DeArmand, Community Arts Council, Edinburg, Ind.)*

Drama. Adapted by J.E. Clark. Based on a poem by Edwin Markham. Cast: 3m., 3w. Conrad, a humble cobbler, wakes up on Christmas morning believing that his Lord has promised to visit him this day. Was it all a dream, or did Conrad really hear the voice of the Lord? A beautiful play with a striking message about faith and love. It is equally appropriate for religious and secular theatre and for audiences of all ages. Very easy to stage by adults or children. The play is just the right length to replace a sermon, thus, chancel furniture works nicely. The few simple pieces of furniture may be rearranged to fit virtually any space or requirement. Costumes may be modern, period or timeless. A director's script is available containing drawings of costumes and set, details on all technical aspects of staging, and discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also suggests the complete blocking and full stage directions for all movement and business. Approximate running time: 15 to 20 minutes. Code: CL3.

El Sueño Navideño. The Christmas Dream in Spanish is available. Superb for bilingual programs as well as presentation in Spanish-speaking areas. Same cast, etc. For a truly dramatic bilingual program; present both versions back-to-back. Code: E73.

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308
Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170
Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

www.FamilyPlays.com

ISBN-10: 0-88680-025-0
ISBN-13: 978-0-88680-025-3



9 780886 800253 >
The Christmas Dream

The Christmas Dream

*One-act drama adapted
by*

G. E. Clark

(Based on a poem by Edwin Markham)

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308

Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170 • Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

www.FamilyPlays.com

©Family Plays

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by FAMILY PLAYS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website www.FamilyPlays.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: FAMILY PLAYS, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
FAMILY PLAYS of Woodstock, Illinois”

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

© 1970 by I. E. CLARK

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved

(THE CHRISTMAS DREAM)

ISBN: 978-0-88680-025-3

THE CHRISTMAS DREAM

“The Christmas Dream” was first performed at an assembly program in Schulenburg High School on December 19, 1969, and in the sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church of Schulenburg on December 21, 1969. The original cast was as follows:

CONRAD	Sheldon Lippman
NEIGHBOR WILLIAM	Donnie Bretting
NEIGHBOR SARAH	Joan Schulze
A BEGGAR	(Alan Mikesky Ronnie Peschke
AN OLD CRONE	Jan Pratka
A LITTLE CHILD	Alice Hepner*

Scene: Conrad’s Shop

Time: Christmas Day

*The child’s role may be played by a boy or a girl.

NOTES ON THE PLAY

“The Christmas Dream” is a dramatization of Edwin Markham’s poem, “How the Great Guest Came,” with the kind permission of the poet’s son, Virgil Markham. The poem appears in *The Shoes of Happiness and Other Poems* by Edwin Markham.

This play was designed to be performed on a stage, in the chancel of a church, or on the floor of a fellowship hall or club room. The suggested arrangement of the furniture is similar to the arrangement of the altar or communion table and pulpits in many churches so that these items of church furniture may be used as the set properties. However, the few simple pieces of furniture may be re-arranged to fit virtually any space or stage. Costumes may be modern, period, or timeless.

The premiere church performance replaced the sermon at the morning service on the Sunday before Christmas. The play was written specifically for that purpose, and its playing time—15 to 20 minutes—is the length of an average sermon.

“The Christmas Dream” has an important message about faith and love. It is equally appropriate for religious and secular theatre, and for audiences of all ages.

Full details regarding costumes, set, characterization, and other facets of staging may be found in the Director’s Production Script, available from the publisher.

The Christmas Dream

By I. E. Clark

[The stage represents the tiny shoe shop of old Conrad. At Center is a small table, at Down Right, a work bench, and at Down Left a small cabinet. This room is also Conrad's home — obviously the home of a very poor man. The tools and remnants of his trade are evident on the workbench and cabinet. A small, crude, home-made cross adorns the table; and Conrad's coat is hung on a peg beside the door. CONRAD is sleeping on a pile of rags below the Center table. Softly, from some vague distance, we can hear a Christmas song. Gradually the music grows louder. CONRAD stirs in his sleep; for a moment or two he is exceedingly restless. Suddenly he sits bolt upright, his eyes wide open in amazement. At the moment that he comes awake, the music stops in midnote, as though a record player had been turned off. CONRAD rubs his eyes and looks around the dingy little room. Slowly, almost fearfully, he crawls out of his pallet and moves to the table. CONRAD kneels before the cross.]

CONRAD. Oh, Lord! Blessed Lord! Was it a dream? Or did I really hear your voice? *[He bows his head in humiliation]* Forgive me, Lord — forgive me for even daring to dream that you would speak to one as — as — unimportant as I. But was it a dream! Your voice . . . so clear . . . so beautiful . . . like angels whispering through golden harp strings . . . *[Suddenly CONRAD stands erect and surveys the shabby room]* But . . . but . . . if it wasn't a dream . . . I must prepare . . . *[he hurriedly and excitedly begins setting the room in order]* Everything must be just so! Neat and orderly . . . so that my Lord will know I am glad He came . . . Something to refresh Him! *[He opens his cabinet and searches. All he can find is a half loaf of bread and a jug. He places them on the table beside the cross.]* Now bowls . . . and . . . *[In a forgotten corner he finds two pewter goblets]*. These goblets — how dull they are. When did I use them last? *[He begins polishing them. There is the jangle of a bell outside his door.]*

THE CHRISTMAS DREAM

CONRAD. Could it be . . . could it be so soon! . . . and I'm not prepared! But never mind —

[He rushes to the door joyously, expectantly; but when he gets there, he hesitates. He opens the door slowly, almost fearfully, with his head bowed. WILLIAM and SARAH enter. They are Conrad's neighbors. Disappointment clouds Conrad's face momentarily as he ushers them into the room, but he is hospitable.]

CONRAD. Good morning, Neighbor William, Neighbor Sarah. Come in, come in!

WILLIAM. Good morning to you, Neighbor Conrad. And Merry Christmas. Everything is all right with you, I hope.

CONRAD. Yes, everything is all right . . . did you think . . . ?

WILLIAM. We saw you through your window when we went to milk our cows . . .

SARAH. *[With a curiosity which she finds difficult to hide]* It's not like you to be up and stirring this early . . .

WILLIAM. We were afraid you might be sick and need help . . .

CONRAD. I thank you kindly, good friends. But I . . . no . . . I need no help.

SARAH. Were you expecting a visitor? . . . the look on your face when you opened the door . . . ?

CONRAD. Well, I . . . I . . .

SARAH. I see your table is set for two.

WILLIAM. And here, you've been polishing your old goblets.

CONRAD. Yes, they need polishing. I haven't used them . . . not in a long while . . . not since my wife and baby died . . .

WILLIAM. So long ago?

SARAH. But now you have them out again. Is someone coming — someone special to spend this Christmas Day with you?

CONRAD. *[He has been bursting with the desire to tell them his dream; but he is tortured by the agony of not knowing whether it was only a dream — and nothing more]* Oh, my friends! this may be the dearest and best Christmas I have ever had . . . yes . . . perhaps . . . someone special will come!

WILLIAM. But who? You have no kin. And we are — are we not your only friends?

CONRAD. No . . . yes — you are my good friends; but not my only friends. I have another Friend. And perhaps — perhaps He will come today . . .

SARAH. [*Whispering to her husband*] What's he talking about?

CONRAD. [*He can contain himself no longer*] Oh, my friends! The most glorious thing! This morning — oh, my friends! before dawn, as the first cock signaled the end of night, the Lord's voice whispered in my ear and said, "I am coming to be your guest today"! So I've been busy preparing my poor room — I've put things in order — and set my table for two — Oh! but I have no decorations! Pardon, old friends — pardon — I — shall return immediately. [*He takes his coat from the peg beside the door, throws it over his shoulders, and runs out.*]

SARAH. The poor man!

WILLIAM. What's that he said about the Lord — in a dream?

SARAH. He has been so lonely — and so poor - imagine how sad each Christmas Day has been all these many years while he sat here alone — I'm surprised something like this didn't happen long ago.

CONRAD. [*Bursts through the door with his arms loaded with greenery*] Here, my friends, help me brighten this room with these boughs of evergreen. [*He hands each of them some of the greenery, removes his coat and hangs it by the door and then hurriedly places sprigs of evergreen about the room.*]

WILLIAM. The Lord — did you say — the Lord — is coming to visit you today?

CONRAD. Yes — I heard his voice —

WILLIAM. You mean — [*he timidly points toward Heaven*] that Lord?

CONRAD. My friend . . . you think — it was only a dream — nothing more!